

#### CITY OF LEESBURG

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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## CHAPTER X RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

#### A. INTRODUCTION

Recreation is defined as refreshment in body or mind by some form of play, amusement, or relaxation and is essential to our overall well-being. Realizing this, the City of Leesburg strives to provide all citizens with access to recreation facilities and open space areas. The City's lead office in charge of adequately designating parklands and providing public recreation opportunities is the Recreation and Parks Department. The purpose of this element is to identify parks and recreation facilities, establish level of service standards for the provision of such facilities, and analyze current and projected park and recreational needs based on population projections and the established level of service standards. This element also contains specific goals, objectives, and policies to guide the provision of parks and recreation facilities through the year 2020.

#### B. INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

Recreation may be classified as being either activity-based or resource-based. Activity-based recreation is defined by sites and facilities developed for the enjoyment of particular user-oriented, activities such as tennis, basketball, shuffleboard, soccer, or recreational programs such as aerobics or painting. Resource-based recreation, on the other hand, utilizes the natural environment to provide more passive activities such as picnicking, hiking, fishing, swimming, or boating. The City of Leesburg provides a wide range of recreation opportunities to its residents. The City's park inventory includes a total of twenty-six (26) parks and recreational facilities, which include City owned parks, school facilities open to the public, and special use facilities, where citizens can enjoy both active and passive forms of recreation.

#### 1. City Parks and Open Space

At present, the City of Leesburg park system includes twenty-one (21) city owned parks and recreational facilities, which encompass over 200 acres of public parklands. Table X-1 shows an inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities in the City of Leesburg. Map X-1 shows the location of these parks. The table and map also show school recreational facilities open to the public.

City parks have been classified based on a hierarchy of park facilities in order to better determine the level of recreation and open space opportunities available to City residents. The classification and standards for the different types of parks were derived from the standards recommended by the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the Outdoor Recreation in Florida – 1994, Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. A description of the characteristics of each park-type is also included in the recreation plan, as well as in this element. Only sites that are officially designated as public parks have been included in this section. Vacant public lands and open space normally found in medians, buffers, retention areas and the like are not included.

As noted on Table X-1, some City parks offer passive recreation opportunities while others offer active recreation. Some parks may offer both, as is the case of Venetian Gardens, which offers active recreational facilities, as well as passive areas for fishing and picnicking.

#### a. Regional Parks

Regional parks are large, resource-based parks serving more than two counties and often consisting of an area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, trails, boating, fishing, swimming and camping. They are usually located no more than an hour's driving distance of the residents they serve. The park should serve a population of over 100,000 and should range in size from a minimum of 250 acres to as much as several thousand acres. The City relies on the State and the County for the provision and maintenance of regional parks.

There are currently no regional parks within the City of Leesburg. However, a variety of recreational opportunities are offered at a regional level by the Federal Government, the State, Lake County, and the Lake County Water Authority and are easily accessible to Leesburg residents. Examples of these facilities are discussed below.

#### (1) Ocala National Forest

The 450,000-acre Ocala National Forest, located in Altoona, approximately twenty-five (25) miles from Leesburg, receives more visitors than any other national forest in Florida. The Ocala National Forest's sand pine scrub ecosystem is the world's largest continuous forest of this type. The Forest offers a wide array of hiking and bicycling trails and is abound with scenic camping opportunities. An eclectic variety of plants, trees, and wildlife such as white-tail deer, alligators, bald eagles, and ospreys are known to inhabit the forest and may be observed along the forest's inviting trails.

Within the Ocala National Forest lies Alexander Springs Recreation Area. Known for its unusual beauty, this mammoth spring gushes approximately 80 million gallons of crystal clear water per day, at a year-round temperature of 72 degrees. The surrounding subtropical vegetation of palms, hardwood swamp, and sandpine ridges make this campground an extraordinary place. Snorkeling and scuba diving in Alexander Springs are excellent ways to enjoy the abundant fish and swaying underwater vegetation.

#### (2) Lake Griffin State Recreation Area

Lake Griffin State Recreation Area, developed in the late 1960s, is located in Fruitland Park, approximately two (2) miles north of Leesburg. This State Recreation Area consists of over 425 acres of woodlands and freshwater swamp and is home to Florida's fifth largest live oak tree, which measures over 150 feet tall and 10 feet in circumference. The recreation area also contains 40 campsites with water and electrical hook-ups, a boat ramp, picnic area, picnic shelter and nature trail. While not directly on Lake Griffin, the

boat ramp provides access to the lake via powerboat or canoe. Swimming is not permitted in waters within the park.

#### (3) Lake Louisa State Park

Lake Louisa State Park, located in Clermont, approximately twenty-five (25) miles from Leesburg, is a 4,372-acre state park, which lies on the shores of Lake Louisa in the northeast corner of the Green Swamp. Lake Louisa is one of 13 in a chain of lakes connected by the Palatlakaha River, which is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water.

Recreational activities offered at the park include swimming, picnicking, fishing, canoeing, nature study, and several miles of marked equestrian trails. Hiking is also permitted on the horse trails and an abundance of wildlife can be seen. Birding is a favorite activity with sightings dependent on the seasons. In addition, the park also offers a bathhouse with showers, a shaded picnic area, a public boat ramp located on the river between Lake Louisa and Lake Susan, and a white sand beach.

#### (4) Flat Island Preserve

Flat Island Preserve, which is property of the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), is a 2300-acre conservation area in the Okahumpka Marsh located southwest of Leesburg, west of Lake Harris and north of Lake Denham. Within the Preserve is a 4.5-mile loop trail that is a portion of the Daubenmire Trail. The Flat Island section of the trail was built and is maintained by the Florida Trail Association. There is a long boardwalk off the south section of the loop that leads to a canoe launch. Primitive camping is allowed on Flat Island by permit and canoes are available for rent through the LCWA Office. Additional trails are planned on the property in the future.

#### (5) Hickory Point

The Hickory Point Recreation Area is a 68-acre multi-use waterfront park, which is also owned by the Lake County Water Authority. It is located less than ten (10) miles from Leesburg, along the northern shore of Lake Harris immediately north of the Howey Bridge in Tavares. Hickory Point provides a diverse range of recreational activities which include a screened pavilion, barbecue grills, a playground, horseshoe pits, a sand volleyball court, a swimming beach, and open-field play areas, as well as a fishing pier and 12 boat ramps.

#### (6) Sawgrass Island Preserve

Sawgrass Island Preserve is a 1,137-acre site located approximately twenty miles from Leesburg, at the north end of Lake Yale in Umatilla. The preserve's major feature is a 600-acre shallow marsh. Approximately 61% of

the property is comprised of forested and herbaceous wetlands (692.2 acres) with the remaining 39% consisting of uplands (444.5 acres). The upland community types found on the Preserve include unimproved pasture, shrub/brushland, mesic hammocks, xeric hammocks, and pine flatwoods. Wildlife includes sandhill cranes, gopher tortoises, pocket gophers, ring-neck ducks, foxes and scrub jays. Activities that can be enjoyed in the preserve include bird watching, hiking, and horseback riding.

#### b. <u>Community Parks</u>

Community parks are defined as "ride to" parks that should be located near major streets or arterials. Community parks are designed to serve the needs of four to six neighborhoods that have residents within a radius of up to three (3) miles. Typical facilities found in community parks are designed to serve the entire family and include both passive and active recreation opportunities such as playground areas, recreation buildings, sports fields, paved multi-purpose courts, picnic areas, open or free play areas, swimming pools, and landscaping. Venetian Gardens, which within its 110 acres includes Rogers Park and Lake Harris Ski Beach, is currently the City of Leesburg's sole community park. It should be noted that this acreage includes some of the lake as well. Resources and facilities that can be enjoyed by the entire community include a swimming pool, playground, sand volleyball courts, the Leesburg Community Building, the Leesburg Cultural Arts Building, open space, covered and uncovered picnic tables, boat ramps, bath house, and the Venetian Cove Marina which offers boat storage areas, fuel, rest rooms, food and supplies, boat repair and sales, fork lift, and cleaning services.

Venetian Gardens is a popular spot for boat launching, fishing, and bird watching. Several significant events are held at Venetian Gardens, which draw citizen from all parts of the City. These events include the City of Leesburg Fireworks Celebration, a large Easter egg hunt, and the ESPN-hosted bass fishing tournament, as well several small fishing tournaments throughout the year.

#### c. <u>Neighborhood Parks</u>

Neighborhood parks are "walk to" parks that are generally located along streets where people can walk or bicycle without encountering heavy traffic. They serve the population of a neighborhood in a radius of up to three-fourths (3/4) of a mile. The size of a neighborhood park usually ranges from 2 to 10 acres. Typical facilities provided include playground areas, recreation buildings, sports fields, paved multipurpose courts, picnic areas, open or free play areas, and landscaping.

There are currently nine (9) parks that can be categorized as neighborhood parks based upon acreage, location, and facilities available. These parks include Corrine Williams Park, Fountain Lake Park, Herlong Park, Jessie L. Holliman Park, John L. Johnson Park, Lake Dixie Park, Singletary Park, the Susan Street Complex, and the Recreation Department Administration Complex. This count does not include

Venetian Gardens Community Park, which also offer those facilities normally found in neighborhood parks.

#### d. Mini-Parks (Pocket-Parks)

Mini-parks are small facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population, as well as specific groups such as toddlers. Mini-parks, which include tot-lots and pocket parks, are designed to serve the needs of a neighborhood within a radius of up to ½ mile. A minimum of one half (1/2) acre for each stand-alone park is recommended. However, they may be incorporated into larger parks such as neighborhood or community parks. Mini-parks primarily offer passive recreation and typical facilities provided include playground areas, benches, open space, picnic tables, and landscaping. The City of Leesburg currently has four (4) parks classified as mini-parks based upon acreage, as well as upon the consideration of what proportion of the community they actually serve. These parks include the Leesburg Towne Square, as well as three parks which are currently unnamed, but for purposes of this element will be referred to as Main Street Mini-Park, Perkins/Johnson Mini-Park, and Sunshine/Webster Mini-Park. The size of a mini-park is not as important as its location. Therefore, the City has not established a level of service standard based on population for this category of park.

#### e. <u>Special Use Facilities</u>

Special use facilities are designed to serve the unique recreational needs of certain population groups. One example within the City of Leesburg is the Mote-Morris House, which is a historic home constructed circa 1892. The Mote Morris House was formerly located at 1021 West Main Street, until September 1990, when it was purchased by the City and relocated to its present location of 1195 West Magnolia Street. The Mote-Morris House is now available for public use and is considered a recreational opportunity for City residents as it offers wedding facilities and a pavilion. Other special use facilities include, but are not limited to, Dabney Pool, the Pat Thomas Memorial Stadium, which is also used by Leesburg High School for home games, the Shuffleboard Complex, the Palmetto Street Tennis Courts, and the National Guard Armory which is used for Wheelchair basketball. Levels of service for the fields and courts found in special use facilities are discussed in the following City Recreational Facilities section. In addition, several Lake County Public Schools located in Leesburg also function as special use facilities and are discussed in the School Facilities section of this element. The acreage of these facilities was not included in the calculation of community or neighborhood parklands.

#### f. Open Space

Open space is defined as any land or water surface that affords unobstructed physical movement, and is relatively free of human-made structural mass. Open space can be either publicly or privately owned. Public open space can include areas for public use, such as lakes or green space in the City's parks, or open space that is owned by the City, but restricted to the public, as is the case with conservation land and

stormwater retention areas. Private open space can include green space found in private parks, golf courses, or agricultural lands. The City's Code of Ordinances ensures that there is adequate open space to serve as wetland and floodplain buffers, as well as ample impervious surface to protect the City's groundwater resources. The Conservation Element of this Growth Management Plan ensures that such areas remain undeveloped, as their preservation is crucial in the protection of wetlands, floodplains, vegetative and wildlife communities, and the City's potable water supply.

The overall parkland level of service established in this element will ensure that there is adequate public open space for recreation purposes and for the sense of well being that open waters and undisturbed green space bestows on the population.

#### 2. City Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities are user-oriented and activity based (as opposed to resource based). These facilities are normally located within parks. The City of Leesburg has a wide variety of recreational facilities to serve its population. Most parks within the City provide at least one type of active recreational facility, while some facilities provide a concentration of single sport facilities, such as the Shuffleboard Complex or the Palmetto Street Tennis Courts. Table X- 1 identifies the recreational facilities provided at each park, school, or special facility. Table X- 5 shows an inventory of recreational facilities by type. For example, Leesburg has 13 baseball/softball fields, which is an abundance for a City of its size. The City has 24 shuffleboard courts, which is a also surplus, however, this is typical due to the age of the population in Florida communities. In addition, the City of Leesburg also has four (4) basketball courts, five (5) boat ramps, five (5) playgrounds, four (4) racquetball/handball courts, two (2) swimming pools, and eight (8) tennis courts.

In addition to the typical recreational facilities found in City parks, the Recreation and Parks Department is attempting to address the unique needs of the City residents. In response to the gaining popularity of skateboarding and inline skating, the City has been attempting to develop a one-acre skate park. The City had allotted \$110,000 for such a project; however, these funds were recently redirected to prioritize the Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex. The Sleepy Hollow Recreational Complex will fulfill the City's need for outdoor recreational facilities.

An Interlocal Agreement exists between the City of Leesburg and the Leesburg Junior Jackets, the Mt. Calvary Community Crusaders, and the Boys & Girls Club of Lake County. These Agreements are considered on an annual basis during the budget process. The Junior Jackets, a not-for-profit agency, operates a youth football program.

#### 3. School Facilities

The City of Leesburg maintains agreements with the School Board of Lake County, which grant City residents with the use of Oak Park Middle School Softball Complex, Lee Opportunity Center sandlot ball fields, and Leesburg High School. Table X- 1 shows the school recreational facilities that are open to the public. However, it should be noted that the City will be losing the use of the Oak Park Complex with the construction of a new grade school at that location in the near future.

#### 4. State Facilities

In addition to the previously mentioned Lake Louisa State Park, the General James A. Van Fleet State Trail, an amenity of General James A. Van Fleet State Park, traverses through west Lake County, and provides Leesburg residents with an opportunity for hiking and bicycling excursions. Locally, Herlong Park (shown in Table X- 1 as a neighborhood park), located on Lake Griffin in Leesburg, is also a State-owned property that meets the recreational needs of City residents. An agreement exists between the City of Leesburg and the State of Florida regarding the use of the park. In this situation, the City mows the property in return for use of the boat ramp and additional facilities. The City also has a facilities use agreement with the State Armory Board whereby the City supplies utilities to the National Guard Armory and, in return, is allowed to use the Armory for certain public events.

#### 5. County Facilities

Lake County operates and maintains several park and open space facilities that are available to the citizens of Leesburg. An example of these County parks can be found in Table X-2.

#### 6. Private Facilities

Some recreational facilities and services such as bowling alleys, golf courses, movie theatres, arcades, etc. are provided by the private sector, and are available to the public through a membership or a fee. The provision this type of recreational resources is normally based on market studies. Therefore, it can be assumed that the quantity of such resources will increase as the City's population increases. The following are examples of private recreational facilities serving the residents of Leesburg:

AMC Lake Square 12 Theatres	10401 US Highway 441	Leesburg, FL
AMF Leesburg Lanes	2813 West Main Street	Leesburg, FL
Main Street Gymnastics	215 East Main Street	Leesburg, FL
Monarch Golf Club	5325 St. Andrews Arc	Leesburg, FL
Silver Lake Golf &Country Club	9435 Silver Lake Drive	Leesburg, FL
Skate World	424 North Palmetto Street	Leesburg, FL
Tilt Arcade	10401 US Highway 441 #102	Leesburg, FL
Tropic Theatre	122 West Main Street	Leesburg, FL

In addition, Leesburg Regional Medical Center (LRMC) offers a Wellness Center, located at LRMC North Campus, 700 N. Palmetto Street in Leesburg. The LRMC Wellness Center is available for members and features an indoor heated lap pool, a whirlpool, Cybex, Universal and free-weight training equipment, and a wide array of cardiovascular exercise equipment. The Wellness Center provides individualized fitness programs to meet the needs of each member, and exercise is always supervised by degreed Exercise Specialists.

Fitness programs offered at the Wellness Center include, but are not limited to, aquacize (water aerobics), step aerobics, toning classes, monthly specialty classes and weight loss classes.

Other private recreational facilities are found in residential developments within Leesburg. The facilities provided typically include community/exercise rooms, pools, tennis courts, etc. Some of the developments providing this type of recreation are listed in Table X- 3. These facilities have been addressed in the analysis of park service areas.

#### C. ANALYSIS

Specific recreational demands do not remain constant over time. As the population demographics change, recreational demands change. Attitudes and opinions can be drastically altered from a shift in the demographic makeup of a community. Therefore, it is necessary to assess recreational needs and future demands for facilities in order to plan for the future.

#### 1. Recreational Preferences

The City of Leesburg population is projected to increase by over 3,000 residents in the next two decades. According to the 2000 Census, the median age of residents in 2,000 was 41.5 and persons aged 65 or older comprised 31.5 percent of the population. This pattern is expected to continue through the long-term planning period. As a result, the City should continue to add to the passive recreation facilities as well as to the active ones.

To accurately reflect changes in public demand, tools are needed to identify them. One method is to survey the citizens for their input. From September to November of 2001, the City conducted a survey to determine citizen usage, satisfaction, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system. The survey was sent to approximately 2,000 of the City's randomly chosen utility customers. The goal was to obtain at least 400 completed surveys. The goal was exceeded and 438 surveys were completed. The results showed that 30.8% of the population participate in leisure activities one (1) to five (5) hours a week, and 33.3% of residents participate in leisure actives six (6) to ten (10) hours per week. Approximately 9% of the population said that they do not participate in leisure activities. The results of the survey are shown below:

Walking/Jogging	59%	Camping	12%
Swimming	35%	Hiking	9%
Festivals	30%	Football	8%
Arts/Crafts	28%	Softball	8%
Fishing	25%	Baseball	7%
Biking	25%	Tennis	6%
Golf	25%	Basketball	6%
Nature Preserves	22%	Skating/Skateboarding	4%
Hobbies	21%	Soccer	4%

Fitness/Aerobics	20%	Gymnastics	4%
Picnics	19%	In-line Skating/Hockey	3%
Boating	18%	Racquetball	2%
Dance	17%	Equestrian	2%
Bowling	16%	Other	9%
Weight Training	13%	Don't Participate in Activities	9%

#### 2. Level of Service Standards

Levels of service standards are a measure for determining the specific types and amounts of parklands necessary to accommodate the recreational needs of local communities. The criteria define the acreage, facility type, and service area requirements for various types of recreation sites and areas. The following is an analysis of those standards developed in the 1993 Growth Management Plan as well as new LOS standards to be adopted by the City, based on the changes seen in population demographics and preferences.

#### a. <u>Parks and Open Space</u>

In 1993, the City of Leesburg established levels of service to meet the basic recreation and open space needs of citizens through 2001. To continue to provide adequate facilities, the City will use the following standards for types of parks (also shown on Table X-4):

Community Parks 5 acres/1,000 population Neighborhood Parks 2 acres/1,000 population

Mini-Parks N/A

Overall Parkland 6 acres/1,000 population

Overall parkland is intended to cover mini-parks and special use facilities, in addition to community and neighborhood parks. However, standards for mini-parks are based on location, rather than population. Therefore, the City will need to inventory all mini-parks (pocket parks) to determine where they are needed.

The City will continue to rely on the State and Lake County for the provision of larger regional-type parks; therefore, the City will not be adopting a level of service standard for Regional Parks. Table X- 4 summarizes the levels of service to be adopted and the guidelines to be used for location and park size. Based on current population figures, the City has surplus of 63 acres for community parks, 49 acres for neighborhood parks, and 109 acres for overall parkland. Since there is adequate acreage for these park types, and the parks are conveniently located to serve the residential areas of the City, future improvements shall concentrate on the provision of mini-parks.

#### b. Recreational Facilities

Recreational level of service standards are developed to assist planners in creating a measurable system of determining when additional facilities are needed to keep pace with public demand. In 1993, the City established level of service standards for the provision of recreational facilities. Those standards have been tailored to address specific preferences of City residents and will serve as guidelines for the City to follow as new parks are developed. Table X- 5 shows an inventory of recreational facilities and the surpluses and deficiencies based on current population estimates and the recommended guidelines. In accordance with these guidelines the City is currently not deficient in recreational facilities except for trails. However, by 2010, the City will begin to show deficiencies in basketball courts, football/soccer fields, and racquetball/handball courts. By 2015, the City will begin to show additional deficiencies in tennis courts, playgrounds, and boat ramps.

#### 3. Service Areas

Determining service area is as important as the range of population served, as it helps determine location of future parks, avoiding concentration. Parks need to be dispersed to ensure that all residents have easy access to recreation facilities and open space. The following section gives recommended locational standards for types of parks. As noted above, the City is satisfactory when it comes to location. However, future parks will be a consideration for newly annexed areas if they are developed for residential purposes.

#### a. <u>Regional Parks</u>

Regional parks should serve a population of over 100,000 and should range in size from a minimum of 250 acres to as much as several thousand acres. However, the City relies on the State and the County for the provision and maintenance of regional parks. Currently, the City of Leesburg is within the service area, based on one hour's driving distance, from the Ocala National Forest, Lake Griffin State Recreation Area, Lake Louisa State Park, Flat Island Preserve, Hickory Point, and Sawgrass Island Preserve. Therefore, the City of Leesburg is adequately served with regional parks.

#### b. <u>Community Parks</u>

Three (3) mile service area radius was drawn around the Venetian Gardens/Rogers Park/Lake Harris Ski Beach acreage to identify those areas that are currently not being served by this park type. Map X- 2 shows that the Venetian Garden's central location currently serves the City. However, the newly annexed areas fall outside of Venetian Garden's service area and a community park may be necessary to serve these areas in the future.

#### c. Neighborhood Parks

Three quarter (3/4) mile service radii were drawn around existing neighborhood parks to identify those areas that are deficient in this type of park. The

neighborhood park service area radius was also drawn around parts of Venetian Gardens, because this park also serves as and includes the facilities normally found in neighborhood parks. Map X- 2 shows the areas of the City not served by neighborhood parks. A portion of the City to the east, located west of the Leesburg Regional Airport, is currently not being served by neighborhood parks. However, the Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex, which is currently under development, will aid in satisfying this need. Neighborhood parks are not serving the recent annexations to the west of the City. Therefore, the City should determine if those areas are currently being served by private parks and recreational facilities and, if necessary, should make efforts to locate future neighborhood parks there.

#### d. <u>Mini-Parks</u>

A ¼ mile service area was drawn around existing mini-parks and also community and neighborhood parks that serve the purpose of mini-parks fir the surrounding population. The City provides mini-parks above and beyond the requirement for neighborhood parks, but mini-parks aren't critical to our provision of parks. The City needs to perform a complete inventory of its mini-parks, and if deficiencies are found, they can be resolved by the City providing new mini-parks, requiring new development to provide parkland, or charging impact fees. The goal in the next few years will be to provide public mini-parks either as individual sites or as part of larger parks, and to encourage the provision of this type of facility by the private sector as part of new residential developments.

#### 4. Special Groups Recreational Needs

Special recreation groups are recognized as a large portion of the population of Leesburg. Elderly people, young people, and people who are mobility impaired are all provided with accessible recreation facilities by the City of Leesburg's through the Recreation and Parks Department.

The elderly are afforded the provision of several shuffleboard courts located throughout the City. Although not provided by the City of Leesburg, there is a Leesburg Senior Center located at 1211 Penn Street. This Senior Center is a United Way Agency operated by the Lake County Department of Senior Services. The Center's recreational programs, provided for seniors aged 55 years and older, include planned leisure events such as the following:

- Aerobics
- Card Games such as Bridge
- Bingo
- Dancing
- Congregate meals

In addition, the City of Leesburg is hoping to construct a large multi-purpose facility which would fulfill the need of a City operated Senior Center.

The young are afforded a wide variety of activities through the City's Recreation and Parks Department, including youth athletic leagues, lessons, and camps, which are all offered for a nominal fee. Below is a list of specific activities.

#### **Youth Leagues**

Boys Youth Tackle Football Leesburg Youth Baseball Cal Ripkin Minor

League

Youth Junior Basketball Leesburg Youth Baseball Cal Ripkin Major

League

Cheerleading Squad Hot Shots Basketball

Prep Volleyball Leesburg Babe Ruth League
Wheelchair Basketball Leesburg Little Miss Softball
Junior Soccer Babe Ruth Junior Miss Softball

Prep Basketball World Cup Soccer Leesburg Cap League Baseball Pee Wee Soccer

T-Ball Babe Ruth Senior Miss Softball

Lessons

Cheerleading Skating
International Folk Dancing Tennis
Tang Soo Do Karate Bowling

**Camps** 

Girls Fast Pitch Softball Clinic Summer Day Camp

Christmas Vacation Baseball Camp Christmas Vacation Softball Camp

Challenger British Soccer Camp

Winter Break Softball

Spring Break Day Camp

Winter Break Day Camp

School Daze Out

Winter Break Baseball Camp

Tennis Camp Dog Obedience

Adults are afforded a wide variety of activities through the City's Recreation and Parks Department, which are offered for a nominal fee. Below is a list of specific activities:

#### Adult Classes/Leagues

Tennis Lessons Beginner's Classes in Mountain Dulcimer

Water Volleyball American Red Cross 1st Aid & Safety

Aquacise Lap Swim
Adult Summer Soccer Volleyball

Men's Basketball League Women's Church Softball League
Coed Softball League Women's Industrial Softball League

Adult Golf League Men's Industrial Softball League

Parent's Night Out

The City offers recreational opportunities for people who are mobility impaired. These opportunities include a designated time to swim in Venetian Gardens' wheelchair accessible swimming pool, as well as wheelchair basketball and baseball, offered at the National Guard Armory, and the Lake County Special Olympics.

#### 5. Provision of Future Parks and Open Space

Parklands serve two purposes, to conserve open space and natural resources, and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities. The acquisition of recreation areas is one of the best means for conserving open space. Demand for outdoor recreation opportunities can be met by providing parks for resource-based pursuits such as boating or picnicking, as well as parks for active user-oriented pursuits such as tennis, baseball, and basketball.

The City has a few plans for the development of parks and recreational facilities. They include the following.

#### a. <u>Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex</u>

Currently, the City owns 68 acres of undeveloped land, which has been reserved for the development of the Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex. The construction of this complex is presently the City's top priority, as it will provide residents with athletic fields and other active recreational opportunities, as well as passive recreation opportunities.

#### b. <u>Carver Heights Stormwater Park</u>

The City has set aside approximately seven and a half (7.5) acres, including a 3.7-acre pond, in the Carver Heights Drainage Basin for a stormwater park. In addition to improving drainage conveyance and stormwater storage capacity, the wetland park will be used for open space and environmental education purposes. The City is also considering the potential of development as a passive park, in which case, hiking trails would be created. Work on the park is scheduled to begin at the end of January, 2003, and completion is expected by the end of the year.

#### c. Okahumpka Swamp

The City recently acquired and annexed 3,400 acres of Okahumpka swampland, on Lake Dunham, which is being considered for future open space and possible active recreation facilities, such as a canoe launch. Recreational possibilities are currently being discussed with surrounding jurisdictions.

#### d. <u>Bourley Nature Center</u>

The City is discussing the prospect of a Bourley Nature Center with the Lake County Water Authority

#### e. <u>Leesburg Downtown Multi-purpose Trail</u>

The City also recently acquired railroad right-of-way through the Rails to Trails movement for the development of The City of Leesburg Downtown Multi-Purpose Trail and a linear park. The City of Leesburg Downtown Multi-Purpose Trail is a planned three-quarter mile trail that will run from the Mote-Morris House on 12th Street to Venetian Gardens, and will form part of the connection between the TAV-LEE Trail and the Leesburg-Okahumpka Trail, an interconnecting loop within the planned Central Florida Loop Trail System. The TAV-LEE Trail when completed will be a bike/pedestrian trail that will connect Leesburg and Tavares. It will be incorporated in the widening of U. S. Highway 441. The Downtown Multi-Purpose Trail is being designed to accommodate individuals who want to walk, hike, jog, bicycle, or roller skate. Preliminary design concepts are divided into two segments: the abandoned railroad right-of-way and the Canal Street right-of-way. The railroad right-of-way consists of abandoned railbed, which is approximately 50 feet wide, and runs from 12th Street to Canal Street, a distance of about 0.6 miles. This section is planned to be a 12-foot section with bicycle and pedestrian lanes. Where possible, the Trail will be buffered using landscape materials including various native xeric type trees and shrubs. Canal Street is an existing street in the City of Leesburg that will provide a connection from the railroad right-of-way to Venetian Gardens. The Canal Street right-of-way is approximately 60 feet wide and currently includes two 20-foot paved lanes and sidewalks on each side of the street. The City plans to restripe the paved sections of the street to provide bicycle paths along both sides of the street. Incorporating Canal Street into the Trail extends the length of the Trail by approximately 850 feet and provides an interim trailhead with the parking facilities at Venetian Gardens. Construction design for the first phase of the City's Rails to Trails Project has begun, and actual construction is expected to start in the fall. The City of Leesburg filed a formal request with the U. S. Surface Transportation Board for a Public Use Condition on other abandoned railroad lines in the vicinity of Leesburg in order to reserve all of them for future use as recreational trails.

#### f. Skate Park

As mentioned previously, the City is striving to develop a one-acre skate park to provide residents with a safe place for skateboarding and in-line skating, although the project has been reprioritized. However, if funds become available, the City is striving for a completion date of fall of 2004. When developed, this park will most likely be located at the Susan Street Complex.

#### g. Other

At this time, the City is also evaluating the feasibility of developing a dog park, which would serve to provide legal on-leash and off-leash exercise areas for dogs.

However, at this time, a site has not been chosen and no completion date has been given. The City of Leesburg has also expressed the need of an aquatic center, also for which no formal arrangements have been made.

#### 6. Access to Recreational Sites and Facilities

Access to existing parks is well suited to many special needs groups. Special considerations will need to be addressed on a site-by-site basis, for deficiencies in the special access needs of these groups. For example, while people with disabilities are provided parking areas at most of the parks, wheelchair access is not provided in the majority of these parks. Each special needs group has particular access problems which will need to be addressed. Consideration to these access issues will need to be given at the time of new park development.

According to the ADA, an important aspect of accessibility to be considered when constructing new parks or altering existing parks, is the issue of stable ground surfacing, which allows a person with mobility impairment to negotiate with dignity. For example, a large area of loose fill such as sand or wood chips is not easily accessible. Rather, a design following ADA guidelines might use a combination of more rigid surfaces such as an engineered wood fiber, rubber surfaces along accessible routes, clear ground spaces, and maneuvering spaces, in conjunction with small areas of loose fill.

Per ADA standards, consideration should be given to the general layout of youth play areas, particularly to the integration of elements and spaces that can be accessed by children who are differently-abled. Specifically, in areas where elevated play components are provided, additional ground level play equipment must be provided and incorporated into the same play areas. Additionally, the ADA requires that at least 50% of elevated play components must be located on an accessible route and connected by a ramp. The inclusion of soft contained play structures would also provide recreational opportunities for children with disabilities.

In order to address ADA standards, concrete pathways have recently been installed in Venetian Gardens. These internal pathways provide stability for wheelchair access throughout the park.

The existing system of City parks affords access to cyclists and pedestrians, as the parks are numerous and dispersed in residential areas throughout the City. Future bicycle path facilities should be designed so as to join recreational areas together with residential areas to upgrade the accessibility for all citizens to recreation areas. Bicycle path facilities and Rails to Trials Projects are discussed further in the Transportation Element of this Growth Management Plan. A map depicting existing and proposed bicycle facilities can be found in the Transportation Element as well. Access issues will be addressed specifically within the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of this Element.

#### 7. Public Participation in Recreation Planning

The City of Leesburg recognizes the importance of public input; therefore, the Recreation Authority Board currently conducts public meetings on a case-by-case basis for specific projects. This forum serves as a means for citizens to contribute their ideas and to make

requests for future recreational opportunities. Recently, a public discussion was held regarding the Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex.

Table X-1: Inventory of City Parks and Recreational Facilities 2001.

3.5					
Map #	Parks	Acres	Active/ Passive	Resources & Facilities	
		Acres	rassive	Resources & Pacifices	
	unity (110)	110	D .1	N. ID T. III	
1	Venetian Gardens/Rogers Park/Lake Harris Ski Beach	110	Both	Natural Resources: Lake Harris Recreational Facilities: 1 swimming pool, Playground, 2 sand volleyball courts Other: 14 covered picnic tables, 9 uncovered picnic tables, the Venetian Cove Marina, boat ramps, bath house, Leesburg Community Building, Leesburg Cultural Arts Building, open space, Martin Luther King, Jr. Walkway.	
Neighb	orhood (80.9)				
2	Corrine Williams Park	0.3	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 youth playground, 1 basketball court Other: Picnic area	
3	Fountain Lake Park	2.8	Passive	Natural Resources: Pond Recreational Facilities: 1 youth playground Other: 5 covered picnic tables, lighted walking path, open space	
4	Herlong Park	45.8	Passive	Natural Resources: Lake Griffin Recreational Facilities: 1 boat ramp Other: 1 fishing dock, 7 covered picnic tables, parking facility, antique train engine, open space	
5	Jessie L. Holliman Park	0.3	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 youth playground Other: Picnic area	
6	John L. Johnson Park	1.4	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 youth Playground, 2 basketball courts Other: None	
7	Lake Dixie Park	3	Passive	Natural Resources: Lake Dixie Recreational Facilities: none Other: Paved pathway, with lights along the path	
8	Recreation Administration  – Park Maintenance  Complex	0.8	Active	Natural Resources: None Other: Meeting facilities	

Map			Active/			
#	Parks	Acres	Passive	Resources & Facilities		
9	Singletary Park	2	Passive	Natural Resources: Lake Harris		
				Recreational Facilities: 2 boat ramps		
				Other: 1 fishing pier, parking facility, open		
				Space.		
10	Susan Street Complex	24.5	Active	Natural Resources: None		
				Recreational Facilities: 4 lighted tennis		
				courts, 4 lighted racquetball courts, 2 batting		
				cages, 4 lighted Little League baseball fields,		
				1 lighted football/soccer field		
				Other: Picnic Area		
Mini-Pa	arks (1)					
11	Main Street Mini-Park	See	Passive	Natural Resources: Open Space		
		Note		Recreational Facilities: none		
		(2)		Other: Bench		
12	Perkins/Johnson Mini-	See	Passive	Natural Resources: Open Space		
	Park	Note		Recreational Facilities: None		
		(2)		Other: Bench		
13	Sunshine/Webster Mini-	See	Passive	Natural Resources: Open Space		
	Park	Note		Recreational Facilities: None		
		(2)		Other: Bench		
14	Towne Square	See	Passive	Natural Resources: None		
		Note		Recreational Facilities: None		
		(2)		Other: Benches, Streetscape		
Special	Use Facilities (13.5)					
15	Babe Ruth Field	1.2	Active	Natural Resources: None		
				Recreational Facilities: 1 Babe Ruth		
				League baseball field, 1 basketball court		
				Other: None		
16	Dabney Pool	1	Active	Natural Resources: None		
				Recreational Facilities: 1 swimming pool		
				Other: Bath house		
17	Mote-Morris House	1.6	Passive	Natural Resources: None		
				Recreational Facilities: None		
				Other: Historic home for public use.		
18	National Guard Armory	0.3	Active	Natural Resources: None		
	ĺ			Recreational Facilities: 1 indoor basketball		
				court		
				Other: Meeting facilities		
19	Palmetto Street Tennis	1.2	Active	Natural Resources: None		
	Courts			Recreational Facilities: 4 lighted tennis		
				courts		
				Other: None		

Мар			Active/			
#	Parks	Acres	Passive	Resources & Facilities		
20	Pat Thomas Memorial Stadium	6.5	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 1 Babe Ruth League baseball field Other: None		
21	Shuffleboard Complex	1.7	Active	Natural Resources: None Recreational Facilities: 24 lighted shuffleboard courts Other: Clubhouse		
School	Recreational Facilities Oper	to the P	ublic			
22	Oak Park Middle School Softball Complex 2101 South St.	N/A	Active	Recreational Facilities: 2 lighted softball fields  NOTE: The City will be losing the use of this facility with the construction of a new grade school at that location in the near future.		
23	Carver Middle School 1200 North Beecher St.	N/A	Active	Recreational Facilities: 1 softball field		
24	Lee Opportunity Center 207 Lee St.	N/A	Active	Recreational Facilities: 2 sandlot baseball/softball fields		
25	Leesburg High School 1401 West Meadows Dr.	N/A	Active	Recreational Facilities: 1 football/soccer field, 2 sandlot baseball/softball fields		
Parks U	Inder Development (75.5 Ac	res)				
26	Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex <sup>(3)</sup>	68	Both	Natural Resources: Wetlands, lake Proposed Recreational Facilities: 8 baseball/softball fields, 2 soccer fields Other: Picnic tables, restrooms, concessions, maintenance building, walking track		
27	Carver Heights Stormwater Park <sup>(3)</sup>	7.5	Passive	Natural Resources: Wetlands Proposed Recreational Facilities: None Other: Pond, hiking trails, educational kiosks		

<sup>(1)</sup> Neighborhood parks also serve as mini-parks for the immediate neighborhood.

Source: City of Leesburg Recreation and Parks Department, December 2002.

<sup>(2)</sup> Acreage for mini-parks is not available. These parks are based on service area rather than population served.

<sup>(3)</sup> Once completed, these facilities will serve as neighborhood parks.

Table X-2: Lake County Parks and Recreational Facilities.

County Park	City	Location	Facilities
McTureous Memorial	Altoona	Highway 19	Picnic tables, grills, and playground.
Astatula Boat Ramp	Astatula	Located on Little Lake Harris Highway 561 to Florida Avenue to end.	Boat ramp
Astor Recreation Area	Astor	South on Alco Road (HWY 9588) off of C.R. 40.	Neighborhood park with pavilion, playground, tennis and basketball court, and softball field.
Astor Boat Ramp #2	Astor	St. Johns River Boat Ramp, off HWY 40 and end of Butler Street.	Boat ramp
John's Lake Boat Ramp	Clermont	South off Lake Blvd (Hwy 50) on John's Lake. East of Clermont	Boat ramp
Palatlakaha Park Boat Ramp	Clermont	Off of Lakeshore Drive, turn South on Hull Road, on Palatlakaha River.	Boat ramp and dock.
Lake County Fairgrounds	Eustis	Highway 44 to Highway 452	Rodeo and multi-use arena, exhibit buildings.
Marsh Park & Boat Ramp	Eustis	On Lake Yale, north on Yale Retreat Rd.	Boat ramp and park, with playground, grill and picnic tables.
Palatlakaha Creek Boat Ramp	Groveland	Two miles north of Groveland on HWY 19.	Boat ramp
Lake Jem Park and Boat Ramp	Lake Jem	East off hwy. 448, on Apopka Beauclaire canal.	Boat ramp, playground, basketball court, grills and picnic tables
Alexander Springs Recreation Area	Silver Springs	26701 East HWY 40	Camping, canoeing, swimming, fishing, scuba diving, and picnic area
Sorrento Park	Sorrento	Corner of Church St. and Doane Ave., off HWY. 46	Neighborhood park with playground, tennis and basketball courts, grills, and picnic tables.
Discovery Gardens	Tavares	30205 SR 19	Horticultural learning center that includes nine different exotic gardens.

Source: Lake County Government; Land Design Innovations, Inc., July 2002.

Table X-3: Inventory of Private Recreational Facilities, 2000.

	Swimming	Club-	Golf	Shuffleboard	Tennis		
Private Development	Pool	House	Course	Court	Court	Playground	Other
Wellness Center at Leesburg	1					78	Whirlpool,
Regional Medical Center							Fitness
							Equipment
Coachwood Colony Mobile		1					
Home Park						•	
Coachwood East Adult	1	1		4			1 Set
Mobile Home Subdivision							Horseshoes
Pepper Ridge	1	1		4			
Leesburg Lakeshore Mobile		1		4			
Home Park							
Lake Griffin Mobile Home		1					
Park			0.77.1		_		
Pennbrooke	1	1	9 Hole	8	2		4 Picnic Tables
Silver Lake Country Club	1	1	18 Hole		3		
Cypress Creek Mobile Home	1	1		4			4 Sets
Park							Horseshoes
Corley Island Mobile Manor	1	1		4			1 Boat Ramp
Lakeside Terrace	1	1		4			
Griffwood Mobile Home	1			6			
Park							
Harbor Oaks on Lake Griffin	1	1		6			
Brittany Estates	1	1		6			Boat Ramp
Lakeside Village	1	2		3			
Lake Griffin Harbor	1	1		4			Miniature
							Golf, Boat
							Ramp
Hickory Hollow Estates	1	1		3			2 Sets Horseshoes
M 1 1 .	4	1		4			3 Sets
Molokai	1	1		1			3 Sets Horseshoe Pits
Lakes at Leesburg	1	1	9 Hole	8			riorsesnoe Pits
Beach Mobile Park	1	1	у пове				
Florida Angler's Resort		1		2		1	Picnic Tables
Lake Harris Hideaway		1		2 2		1	
		1		<u> </u>			Boat Ramp
Unnamed Boat Ramp							Boat Ramp

**Note:** This table provides an example of recreation facilities provided in private developments, however, this is not a comprehensive list of private developments or facilities.

Source: Leesburg Recreation and Parks Department, December 2001.

Table X-4: Level of Service Standards for Parks, 2000.

Park Type	Park Size (Minimum Acres)(1)	Service Area/Population served	State Recommended LOS	City LOS (Acres/ 1,000 Population)	Existing Acreage	LOS Demand	Surplus/ (Deficiency)
Community	5	Up to 3 Miles/8,000	2	3	110	47	62
Neighborhood	2	Up to 3/4 Mile/2,000	2	2	80.9(2)	31	49.9
Mini-Park	0.5	<sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> mile/500-1,000	2	N/A	Not Available	N/A	N/A
Overall Parkland	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	204.4(2)	95	109.04

<sup>(1)</sup> Based on State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the Outdoor Recreation in Florida – 1994, Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

- (2) Not including the 73 acres currently owned by the City for development as neighborhood parks.
- (3) Acres required based on City LOS and 2000 Census.

Surpluses and deficiencies were based upon a population of 15,956 residents, 2000 Census.

**Source:** Calculations performed by Land Design Innovations, Inc., July 2002.

Table X-5: LOS for Recreational Facilities, 2000.

Facility	Location	Existing Number	DNR Guidelines (Min/Med/Max)	City LOS per Population	Total Necessary	Surplus/ (Deficiency)
Baseball/Softball Fields	Susan Street Complex (4) Oak Park Middle School (2) (Losing) Lee Opportunity Center (2) Leesburg High School (2) Pat Thomas Memorial Stadium (1) Babe Ruth Field (1) Carver Middle School (1)	13	1/2,000 1/5,000 1/10,000	1/2,000	7	6
Basketball Courts	John L. Johnson Park (2) Corrine Williams Park (1) National Guard Armory (1)	4	1/500 1/5,000 1/20,000	1/3,500	4	0
Boat Ramps	Lake Harris Ski Beach (1) Singletary Park (2) Herlong Park (1) Venetian Gardens (1)	5	1/1,500 1/5,000 1/12,500	1/3,000	5	0
Community Centers (Rooms)	Recreation Department Administrative Complex (3) Leesburg Community Building (3) Leesburg Cultural Arts Building (2)	8	N/A	1/2,000	7	1
Football/Soccer Fields	Susan Street Complex (1) Leesburg High School (1)	2	1/4,000 1/6,000 1/25,000	1/4,000	4	(2)
Playgrounds	John L. Johnson Park (1) Jessie L. Holliman Park (1) Rogers Park (1) Fountain Park (1) Corrine Williams Park (1)	5	1/500 1/10,000 1/15,000	1/2,500	6	(1)

Facility	Location	Existing Number	DNR Guidelines (Min/Med/Max)	City LOS per Population	Total Necessary	Surplus/ (Deficiency)
Racquetball/Handball Courts	Susan Street Complex (4)	4	1/2,500	1/3,500	4	0
			1/10,000			
			1/20,000			
Shuffleboard Courts	Shuffleboard Complex (24)	24	1/1,000	1/800	19	5
			1/3,600			
			1/12,000			
Swimming Pools	Venetian Gardens (1)	2	1/1,000	1/10,000	2	0
	H.O. Dabney Recreation Complex (1)		1/25,000			
			1/50,000			
Tennis Courts	Susan Street Complex (4)	8	1/1,000	1/2,000	7	1
	Palmetto Street Tennis Courts (4)		1/2,000			
			1/10,000			
Trails	*	*	N/A	1 mile/2,000	8	(8)

Source: City of Leesburg Recreation and Parks Department; Land Design Innovations, Inc., July 2002.

Surpluses/deficiencies were based upon an estimated 2000 population for Leesburg of 15,956 residents.

\*The City has acquired 0.75 miles of railroad right-of-way for the Downtown Multi-Purpose Trail (2001). The Trail is being designed and will be constructed in 2003/2004. The City is also negotiating with CSX to acquire additional railroad right-of-way (2003).

Table X- 6: Existing and Future Parks & Recreational Facilities, 2000-2020.

Trackly of the	Existing	2005	2010	2015	2020
Facility Type	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Population	15,956	16,969	17,827	18,726	19,659
Parks	T	T			
Community (existing)	110	110			
LOS = 3 per 1,000 (need)	47	50	53	56	59
Surplus/(Deficiency)	63	60	57	54	51
Neighborhood	80.9	156.4			
LOS = 2 per 1,000	31	33	35	37	39
Surplus/(Deficiency)	49	123	121	119	117
Overall Park Acreage	204.4	279.9(1)			
LOS = 6 per 1,000	95	101	106	112	117
Surplus/(Deficiency)	109	178	173	167	162
Recreational Facilities	•				
Baseball/Softball Fields	13	21 <sup>(2)</sup>			
LOS = 1 per 2,000	7	8	8	9	9
Surplus/(Deficiency)	6	13	13	12	12
Basketball Courts	4				
LOS = 1 per 3,500	4	4	5	5	5
Surplus/(Deficiency)	0	0	(1)	(1)	(1)
Boat Ramps	5				
LOS = 1 per 3,000	5	5	5	6	6
Surplus/(Deficiency)	0	0	0	(1)	(1)
Community Centers (Rooms)	8				
LOS = 1 per 2,000	7	8	8	9	9
Surplus/(Deficiency)	1	0	0	(1)	(1)
Football/Soccer Fields	2	4 <sup>(3)</sup>			
LOS = 1 per 4,000	4	4	5	5	5
Surplus/(Deficiency)	(2)	0	(1)	(1)	(1)
Playgrounds	5				
LOS = 1 per 2,500	6	7	7	8	8
Surplus/(Deficiency)	(1)	(2)	(2)	(3)	(3)
Racquetball/Handball Courts	4				
LOS = 1 per 3,500	4	4	5	5	5
Surplus/(Deficiency)	0	0	(1)	(1)	(1)
Swimming Pool	ming Pool 2		, ,	, , ,	
LOS = 1 per 10,000	1	2	2	2	2
Surplus/(Deficiency)	1	0	0	0	0

Facility Type	Existing 2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Population	15,956	16,969	17,827	18,726	19,659
Shuffleboard Courts	24				
LOS = 1 per 800	19	21	22	23	24
Surplus/(Deficiency)	4	3	2	1	0
Tennis Courts	8				
LOS = 1 per 2,000	7	8	8	9	9
Surplus/(Deficiency)	1	0	0	(1)	(1)
Trails	0				
LOS = 1 mile per 2,000	8 miles	8.5 miles	9 miles	9.5 miles	10 miles
Surplus/(Deficiency)	(8 miles)	(8.5 miles)	(9 miles)	(9.5 miles)	(10 miles)

Surplus/deficiencies are cumulative

Positive numbers reflect a surplus and (negative numbers) indicate an acreage/facility deficiency

- (1) Reflects addition of 73 acres of parks/recreation (Sleepy Hollow and Carver Heights)
- (2) Adds in Sleepy Hollow Recreation Complex, 8 baseball/softball fields and 2 soccer fields
- (3) Reflects addition of Sleepy Hollow Complex

**Source:** City of Leesburg, Recreation and Parks Department; Land Design Innovations, Inc. December 2002.

Table X-7: Recommended Acquisition/Construction of Park and Recreational Facilities

	Existing					
Facility Type	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	
Population	15,956	16,969	17,827	18,726	19,659	
Parks						
Community	110	110				
LOS = 3 per 1,000	47	50	53	56	59	
Surplus/(Deficiency)	63	60	57	54	51	
Proposed Additional	0	0	0	0	0	
Neighborhood	80.9	156.4				
LOS = 2 per 1,000	31	33	35	37	39	
Surplus/(Deficiency)	49	123	121	119	117	
Proposed Additional	0	73	0	0	0	
*Overall Park Acreage**	204	279				
LOS = 6 per 1,000	95	101	106	112	117	
Surplus/(Deficiency)	109	178	173	167	162	
Proposed Additional	0	73	0	0	0	
Recreational Facilities						
Baseball/Softball Fields	13	21				
LOS = 1 per 2,000	7	8	8	9	9	
Surplus/(Deficiency)	6	13	13	12	12	
Proposed Additional	0	0	0	0	0	
Basketball Courts	4					
LOS = 1 per 3,500	4	4	5	5	5	
Surplus/(Deficiency)	0	0	(1)	0	0	
Proposed Additional	0	0	1	0	0	
Boat Ramps	5		Т			
LOS = 1 per 3,000	5	5	5	6	6	
Surplus/(Deficiency)	0	0	0	(1)	(1)	
Proposed Additional	0	0	0	0	1	
Community Centers (Rooms)	8	_			_	
LOS = 1 per 2,000	7	8	8	9	9	
	Surplus/(Deficiency) 1		0	(1)	0	
Proposed Additional	0	0	0	1	0	
Football/Soccer Fields	2	4				
LOS = 1  per  4,000	4	(2)	5	5	5	
Surplus/(Deficiency)			(1)	(1)	0	
Proposed Additional 0		2	0	1	0	

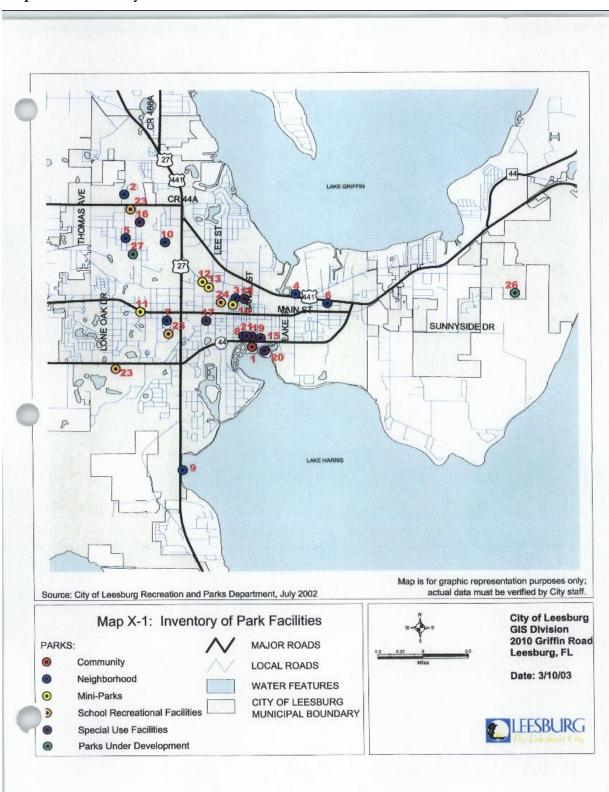
Playgrounds	5				
LOS = 1 per 2,500	6	7	7	8	8
Surplus/(Deficiency)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(1)	0
Proposed Additional	0	1	1	1	0
Racquetball/Handball Courts	4				
LOS = 1 per 3,500	4	4	5	5	5
Surplus/(Deficiency)	0	0	(1)	(1)	(1)
Proposed Additional	0	0	1	0	0
Swimming Pool	2				
LOS = 1 per 10,000	2	2	2	2	2
Surplus/(Deficiency)	0	0	0	0	0
Proposed Additional	0	0	0	0	0
Shuffleboard Courts	24				
LOS = 1 per 800	19	21	22	23	24
Surplus/(Deficiency)	4	3	2	1	0
Proposed Additional	0	0	0	0	0
Tennis Courts	8				
LOS = 1 per 2,000	7	8	8	9	9
Surplus/(Deficiency)	1	0	0	(1)	0
Proposed Additional	0	0		1	0
Trails	0				
LOS – 1 mile per 2,000	8 miles	8.5 miles	9 miles	9.5 miles	10 miles
Surplus/Deficiency	(8) miles	(8.5 miles	(.5) miles	(1) miles	.5 miles
Proposed Additional	0	8.5	0	1.5 miles	0

<sup>\*</sup>LOS for Mini –Parks is based on service area, not population.

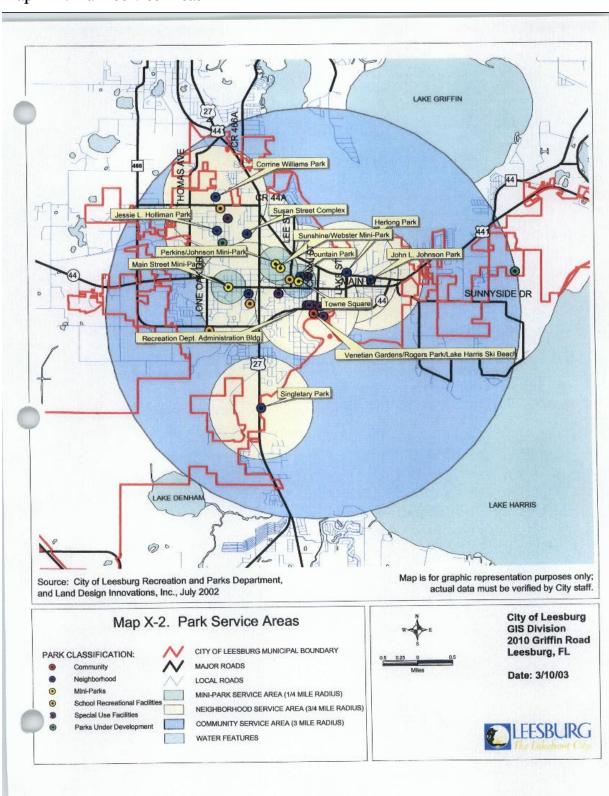
Source: Land Design Innovations, Inc., July 2002.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Reflects addition of 73 acres of parks/recreation (Sleepy Hollow and Carver Heights)

Map X-1: Inventory of Park Facilities



Map X-2: Park Service Areas



#### GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

#### **GOAL 1:**

The City of Leesburg shall provide adequate open space, parks, and recreation facilities to serve the needs of all residents of the City of Leesburg.

**Objective 1.1:** Levels of Service. To ensure adequate lands are provided for public parks, the City shall utilize level of service standards and other criteria specific to population, park size and location. For purposes of implementing this Objective, the City may utilize parklands under the jurisdiction of Lake County.

#### **Policy 1.1.1:** The level of service (LOS) standard for parks shall be as follows:

- Overall Park Land: Six (6) acres per 1,000 residents. This standard includes both passive and active developed open space.
- Community Parks: Three (3) acres per 1000 residents
- Neighborhood Parks: Two (2) acres per 1,000 residents.

### **Policy 1.1.2:** The City of Leesburg shall utilize the following criteria for determining the location and need for park lands:

- Community Park A facility designed to serve the needs of more than one neighborhood. This facility type shall serve a minimum of 8,000 City residents and is located no greater than three (3) miles from those residents. The minimum size of any new community parks shall be five (5) acres.
- Neighborhood Park A facility that serves an entire neighborhood or area with a minimum of 2,000 City residents and is located no greater than three-fourths (3/4) of a mile from those residents. The minimum size of a neighborhood park shall be two (2) acres.
- Mini Park A small park serving a concentrated or limited population of 500 to 1,000 residents within a radius of ½ mile. A minimum size of one half (1/2) acre for each stand-alone park is recommended.

## **Policy 1.1.3:** The City shall incorporate the following definitions within it's Land Development Regulations:

- Active Park Those park areas that are relatively free of man made structural mass, and are utilized for active recreational pursuits.
- Passive Park Those parks that are free of man-made structural mass, and are utilized primarily for passive recreational pursuits.

- Activity-Based Recreation Facilities Facilities designed for specific recreational purposes, such as man-made pools for swimming, courts for tennis, racquetball, basketball, etc.
- Resource-Based Recreation Facilities Facilities dependent on natural resources such as water for boating, forests for hunting, etc.

# **Policy 1.1.4:** The City shall maintain standards for park development and improvements. Standards including buffering, landscaping, parking, and the amount of area available for facilities shall be included in the Code of Ordinances by 2003.

**Policy 1.1.5:** The City shall use the following guidelines for the provision of recreation facilities:

Facility	Guidelines per Population
Baseball/Softball	1:2,000
Fields	
Basketball Courts	1:3,500
Boat Ramps	1:3,000
Community Centers	1:2,000
(Rooms)	
Football/Soccer	1:4,000
Fields	
Handball/Racquetball	1:3,500
Courts	
Playgrounds	1:2,500
Shuffleboard Courts	1:800
Tennis Courts	1:2,000
Swimming Pools	1:10,000
Trails	1 mile:2,000

#### **Policy 1.1.6:**

Currently, Lake County does not provide organized recreation services; therefore, these services are provided by the individual cities within the County. By 2004, the City of Leesburg shall conduct a study to provide an analysis based on existing facility usage to determine if there is a steady growth in facility users that is more consistent with the population growth in the County compared to the City.

**Objective 1.2:** Natural Resources. Maintain a comprehensive park and open space system to ensure the provision of open space, which utilizes existing resources and is consistent with the land and financial resources available.

- Policy 1.2.1: By 2004, the City shall investigate opportunities for public access and enjoyment of the waterfront; improved bike, pedestrian, and equestrian trail systems; as well as open space opportunities.
- **Policy 1.2.2:** The City shall continue to maintain ecologically sensitive wetland areas as open space areas to be protected and enjoyed by the community.
- Policy 1.2.3: Ecologically sensitive lands shall be left in their natural state and considered as part of the City's passive recreation and open space system. Programs to implement this policy shall incorporate the designation of ecologically sensitive areas, where little or no development is permitted, as open space areas.
- **Policy 1.2.4:** The City shall continue to protect the recreational value of its water resources and participate in programs to improve water quality.
- **Policy 1.2.5:** As part of the annexation process, the City shall identify and designate ecologically sensitive wetland areas as open space areas.
- Policy 1.2.6: The City of Leesburg will remove non-native vegetation located in recreation and conservation land owned by the City consistent with funding availability and financial planning defined in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- **Policy 1.2.7:** The City of Leesburg will restore or enhance degraded natural areas in recreation and conservation land owned by the City consistent with funding availability and financial planning defined in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- **Objective 1.3:** Capital Improvements. On an annual basis, the City shall assess needs and propose capital improvements to provide adequate park and recreational facilities and land to meet the demands of future growth, based on established levels of service.
  - **Policy 1.3.1:** The City shall review park and recreation level of service standards, on an annual basis, in order to maintain adequate facilities based on population.
  - **Policy 1.3.2:** The City shall correct or improve existing recreation and open space deficiencies.
  - **Policy 1.3.3:** The City shall evaluate recreational need for newly annexed areas.
  - **Policy 1.3.4:** The Capital Improvements Element shall designate facilities needed to meet future demands according to the designated level of service standards.

**Objective 1.4:** *Coordination Efforts.* The City shall continue to coordinate with Lake County, the Lake County School Board, and other entities to share recreational functions.

- **Policy 1.4.1:** The City shall continue to coordinate the provision of park and recreation facilities and activities with county, regional, and state plans and programs.
- **Policy 1.4.2:** The City shall reach an agreement with the Lake County School Board to maintain and expand the use of school recreational facilities by the general public.
- Policy 1.4.3: Then City shall continue to work with the Lake County Planning Department, the Lake County Water Authority, and the various local trail and hiking organizations to achieve the optimum use of former railroad beds for recreational purposes.
- Policy 1.4.4: The City shall maintain a comprehensive inventory of ecological communities and shall recommend such acquisition, through the Conversation and Recreation Land (CARL) program, the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) program, the Save Our Rivers Program, and Lake County's land acquisition programs of the most vulnerable communities as deemed necessary by the City. The completion of the Palatlakaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) Center shall be included on this list.
- Policy 1.4.5: The City shall cooperate with Lake County in the acquisition of additional lands along Highway 27 to allow public access to the Palatlakaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) Center in order to protect the Palatlakaha River and its upland buffer and to provide additional natural areas and open space to City residents.
- Policy 1.4.6: The City will explore, in cooperation with Lake County, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the St. Johns' River Water Management District (SJRWMD), a means for extending the existing Palatlakaha River hiking trail through the Palatlakaha Environmental and Agricultural Reserve (PEAR) Center beyond its current limits as a part of a system of unified trails and greenways.
- **Objective 1.5:** Access ability. By fiscal year 2005, the City shall assess all public recreation and open space facilities for easy accessibility by all City residents including the elderly, the physically impaired, and the economically disadvantaged.
  - **Policy 1.5.1:** By fiscal year 2006, all public recreation and open space facilities shall be made easily assessable to all City residents including the elderly, the physically impaired, and the economically disadvantaged.

- **Policy 1.5.2:** By 2006, all City recreation and open space facilities shall be constructed or redeveloped to provide access for the physically impaired.
- **Policy 1.5.3:** All City owned facilities shall be accessible to automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians where appropriate.
- **Policy 1.5.4:** The City shall work with the Council on Aging, to provide access to City recreation and open space facilities.
- **Policy 1.5.5:** The City shall provide recreation and open space programs for economically disadvantaged citizens through civic organizations.

**Objective 1.6:** *Park Identification.* The City of Leesburg shall inventory and clearly identify parks through the creation of a uniform sign package.

- **Policy 1.6.1:** By 2004, the City shall conduct an inventory of mini-parks and areas of potential designation as mini-parks.
- **Policy 1.6.2:** By 2004, the City shall name and provide signage for clear identification of these mini-parks.
- **Policy 1.6.3:** By 2005, the City of Leesburg shall establish and erect a uniform sign package for all City owned and maintained parks and recreational facilities.
- Policy 1.6.4: By 2006, the City of Leesburg shall inventory and verify overall park acreage within the City, through the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- **Objective 1.7:** *Private Development.* As a part of new residential development, the City of Leesburg shall coordinate and encourage the provision of mini-parks as either individual sites, or as part of larger parks to meet the City's recreation and open space demands.
  - **Policy 1.7.1:** The City shall coordinate ways and means for private developers to provide public recreation facilities within their developments.
  - Policy 1.7.2: As stated in the City's Land Development Code, developers shall donate open space and recreation sites for public use, where such planned private development will cause the adopted levels of service to be exceeded. The amount of such donations shall be based on adopted local levels of service and the transfer shall be completed prior to the issuance of a final development order.
  - **Policy 1.7.3:** The City shall utilize the level of service review to recommend recreation improvements located within private development.